

Spotlight on Women in Privacy™



Irene Lau, Legal Counsel (Data Privacy), Ant Group

What do you love about being a privacy professional?

The increased awareness of privacy is correlated with the rapid growth in technology in the past 30 years. Most of the Western population will have some sort of online presence, such as social media and online banking. Identity theft and phishing scams are a result of criminals obtaining personal data and misusing them. Having trained as a corporate and commercial solicitor, what I did never really impacted individuals; being a privacy professional now means that I am making a difference in safeguarding and protecting natural persons' right to privacy.

What was the best professional advice you received?

Work smarter, not harder. In the legal profession, the long hours are somewhat glorified. However, it's important that we look at how our days are spent and how efficient we are. I often think how lawyers are known as efficient and productive because we charge our service in units of six minutes. We understand that time is a finite resource that we must treasure.

What privacy development are you paying attention to this month?

In February 2022, EDPB announced that 22 supervisory authorities across the EEA will investigate the use of cloud-based services by the public sector. This is part of the EDPB 2021-2023 Strategy. One of the key actions under Pillar 3 of the EDPB 2021-2023 Strategy is to assess new technologies such as cloud services. Many large technology companies have launched cloud services, to provide an alternative way to the traditional model of server base technology. From a business point of view, cloud solutions are cheaper, more efficient, and more scalable. However, from a data privacy point of view, personal data can be accessed much more easily. I am paying close attention to see how EDPB will further take steps in achieving this key action. I am particularly interested in how EDPB will further investigate the use of blockchain technology.

What do you do to unwind?

I like to practice yoga or some sort of stretching to unwind, to release the tension that has been building up in my body. I also enjoy going out for dinner and drinks with my friends!